

INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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- About ninety-five percent of the population of Budapest is covered by national health insurance (SZTK). Excluded from this number are indigenous persons, who may receive free medical service upon application to their local councils, and members of the former middle or upper class not professionally comprehended in the plan, who must either consult private physicians or pay for hospitalization.
- Wage earners can prove their right to insurance benefits by means of their identity cards, but their dependents must produce a certificate which must be renewed every two weeks. More than 80 percent of the persons insured in Budapest are, together with their dependents, insured through their place of business, while the remainder are insured through professional organizations.
- Upon the first visit of a patient to the local SZTK physician, he shows his identity card, or in the case of dependents, a certificate. A card of the patient's medical history is filled out. If the patient requires medicine, he may obtain it upon presentation of the doctor's prescription at five to ten percent of the original price. A physician may authorize a patient to stay out of work three days, with a possible extension to six days, but further sick leave requires the authorization of one of the dispensaries. Doctors must be summoned for house calls before 7:30 A.M.
- Although doctors may prescribe drugs commonly available in Hungary two or three times for one patient, they have received orders to limit their prescriptions of imported or expensive drugs. An identical form is used for all SZTK prescriptions. The physician must keep one copy of the prescription, since they are routinely controlled by the SZTK center. The prescription form contains the name and address of the patient, his place of employment, the prescription and the signature of the physician. Physicians also have a SZTK stamp which they affix to prescriptions. When the medicine is supplied the patient must sign for it, since pharmacies are obliged to keep careful records. It is not, however, necessary to sign for patent or ordinary medicines.

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5. Pharmacies are generally open from 8 A.M. to 7 P.M., and a pharmacy on the corner of the Boulevard and Rakoczy Street has 24 hour service. Pharmacies are well stocked, both with Hungarian preparations, and, to a lesser extent, with imported drugs.
6. On the first visit to a central dispensary, the patient fills out medical history card and envelope for the filing department. The envelope accompanies the patient wherever he goes in the dispensary on all visits, and on each occasion, he returns it to the filing department. The filing department also assigns the patient a number for the department of his intended visit. On visiting a department, the patient submits the number, the envelope, and a letter from a district doctor recommending treatment, to the nurse. For a single visit, the patient is given a card to return to his district doctor, whereas for a series of visits a departmental record of the visits is kept.
7. Patients are sent to the dispensaries for X-ray, blood, urine and heart examinations. No appointments are made, and the patients receive their examination the day they apply. Results of instrumental examinations are given immediately, while the results of specimen analyses take 12 to 24 hours.
8. The professional level of the dispensaries is relatively high, and patients are well treated. Heads of dispensary departments may exempt patients from work for any length of time acceptable to the work exemption control department. Persons thus exempted must appear for weekly or monthly check ups, and are expected to remain home except for two hours in the morning for medical treatment. Some form of control, such as a delegate calling from one's place of business, can be anticipated for illnesses exceeding a week in duration.
9. Since many SZTK doctors are politically reactionary, they may be helpful in supplying certification for absence from work or exemption from the army, for example, which is not totally justified.
10. In order to enter a hospital one must first have the recommendation of the district doctor and the central dispensary, after which the patient registers at the SZTK building on Fiumei Road. Allocation of a hospital bed sometimes takes weeks, and the slow procedure may be accelerated by having a letter from the department chief of the dispensary or by bribing the central office official. Forty per cent of the sickness allowance paid by SZTK goes toward covering hospitalization costs. Although treatments are free, it is customary to tip hospital nurses.
11. SZTK members may receive one pair of glasses a year, orthopedic supports and dental care. After receiving an orthopedic prescription from a departmental doctor of a dispensary, the patient goes to the factory manufacturing the device, where he receives it for ten per cent of its price. Glasses are available at the Ofotert shops.
12. All of the larger factories have a dispensary with a minimum of one nurse and one doctor. They have a limited supply of medicines.
13. Ambulances may be summoned by dialing a two digit number, posted on every telephone booth.
14. Doctors' fees for private house calls are 40 to 100 forint.
15. Hospital patients may receive visitors on Wednesdays and Fridays from 4 to 6 P.M., and Sundays from 3 to 6 P.M., and occasionally at other times with special permission from the director's office. Although it is legally prohibited to bring food to hospitals, the letter of the law is frequently ignored.

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16. Children are inoculated between infancy and the age of 14 for small pox, diphtheria, typhoid fever, tetanus, and whooping cough. Children under six are inoculated by private doctors or in health centers, while children over six are inoculated by the school doctors. Certification of inoculation is required for admission to institutes and camps.
17. Not all dispensaries have dental clinics, and those which do not, direct their patients to the clinics on Rottenbiller Street, Madach Square or Szovetseg Street. All treatment with the exception of dentures and technical repairs is free. Thus, most persons prefer to go to private dentists for dentures, since the SZTK supplies inferior materials. Dental treatments in SZTK clinics with regard to extractions, fillings and surgery is on a high standard. Dentists work in three or four hour shifts.
18. An orthodontic clinic (Fogszabalyozas) is located on Vecsey Road. Its services are free, except for a token payment payable at Post Offices.
19. Although antibiotics are locally produced they are considered inferior to imported drugs. A black market, hence, has developed in penicillin, aureomycin and others. The demand for drugs regulating the blood pressure and cortisone products also exceeds the supply.

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